

VIII

THE BATTLE CONTINUED

1881-1887

"La Joie de Vivre" begun and put aside—"Pot-Bouille" —
The outlay at
Medan—Zola's first franc — His hypochondria and
dread of death —
His opinion of drawing-rooms — His idea of writing a book
which would
never end — "Au Bonheur des Dames" begun —Zola falls
seriously ill
— He recovers and finishes "Au Bonheur des Dames" — "
Le Capitaine
Burle" — The decline of Zola's sales—He is still stage-
struck—Alphonse
Daudet and the French Academy — His popularity and
friendship with
Zola — "La Joie de Vivre" finished—"Pot-Bouille" as a
play—First
ideas of "La Terre" — "Germinal" — Zola among the
pitmen — A
charge of plagiarism — The reception of "Germinal" — "
L'Œuvre" —
Zola on politicians and young writers — Death of Victor
Hugo — Zola's
telegram to George Hugo — "Germinal" forbidden as a
play — The
purport of "Germinal" — Zola, humanitarianism, and
artistry — Publi-
cation of "L'Œuvre" — Zola prepares "La Terre" — A
glance at the
French peasantry— Sketch, of "La Terre" by Zola — His
tour of inves-
tigation— Various plays: "Le Ventre de Paris," "Renée,"
Jacques
Darnour," "Tout pour l'Honneur,"—The "Manifesto of the
Five" against
Zola and "La Terre"—Zola's opinion of it—Daudet and
Goncom-t
unconnected with it — Prolonged denunciation of Zola —
M. Lockroy to
the rescue — How Zola became a knight of the Legion of
Honour.

IN the year 1881, besides launching the critical
volumes
enumerated in the last chapter, Zola carried his
Rougon-
Macquart series a step further. Early in the
spring he
planned "La Joie de Vivre," a tale of pain and
suffering,
containing numerous autobiographical
passages, descriptive
of some of his feelings and peculiarities. But
while he was
preparing his notes the recollection of his
mother's recent
death constantly pursued him, and he felt it

would be
impossible for him at that time to write such a
book as he
wished. So, after a few attempts, he decided
to postpone